

DENISON'S VAUDEVILLE SKETCHES

PRICE
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T. S. DENISON
& COMPANY
PUBLISHERS CHICAGO

DENISON'S ACTING PLAYS

Partial List of Successful and Popular Plays. Large Catalogue Free.

DRAMAS, COMEDIES, ENTERTAINMENTS, Etc.

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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

IT MIGHT HAPPEN

A FLIRTATIOUS FRAGMENT
IN ONE FLASH

BY

FREDERICK G. JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF

*"Mary's Millions," "Gimme Them Papers!" "Foiled, By Heck!"
"At Harmony Junction," "Such Ignorance," "The
School of Detecting," "Good Morning,
Teacher," "The Press Agent's
Handbook," etc.*



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
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IT MIGHT HAPPEN

SCENE: *Park or wood drop in one, with rustic bench left of center.*

Lights: *All up from rise to cue for pink flood. At cue, blend pink flood to achieve sunset effect for close. (If light effects are impracticable, this may be omitted.)*

At rise, stage is empty. THE GIRL enters immediately from R. and looks back over her shoulder, indicating that she is being followed and that she is annoyed—but not too much annoyed. She carries a book in her hand. She sees the bench, sits and starts reading at once. THE MAN enters R., walks leisurely across, looking at her as he passes. She deliberately ignores him. As he exits L. she looks up to see if he is gone. He re-enters L. and she hastily pays attention to her book. He walks briskly across, whistling, as though he were intent on getting somewhere, does not look at her and exits R. Again she looks up after him and again he appears R., this time in the same leisurely manner as at first. She pretends to read intently and turns several pages rapidly, to conceal her embarrassment. He approaches the bench, removes his hat and speaks in a manner indicating confidence that she will reply. All the above "business" must be done with not too great haste, but with plenty of snap and dash. In his opening lines, during which he is repeatedly snubbed, he continues to smile in a sociable way and talk brightly as though she were responding.

HE. Good morning.

SHE *(gives no sign of noticing)*.

HE *(looks at his watch)*. I mean good afternoon.

SHE *(continues to ignore him, stifles a yawn and turns a page)*.

HE. Nice day, isn't it?

SHE *(pays no attention)*.

HE. Yes, it is a trifle chilly. It looked so pleasant, too, in the park. In this particular part of the park, I mean.

SHE (*turns sideways so that her back is toward him and continues to read*).

HE. It's getting chillier every minute. I do hope there's not going to be a frost. A late frost always does such horrible damage—to the apple orchards, you know—and the grapefruit groves and—the ukulele trees. Oh, it would be simply too awful. And I was just thinking what a wonderful peach crop we have this year!

SHE (*to herself*). Fresh!

HE. Fresh as an apple blossom and dainty as a rose. In this beautiful spring sunshine, as pretty as any picture—

SHE (*angrily, addressing him for the first time*). Young man, can't you paint your pictures somewhere else?

HE. Oh, I'm not an artist; just an art admirer. I love beauty. (*Looks at her enthusiastically*.) I could stand for hours looking at a thing that is beautifully painted—

SHE (*again turns her back on him and resumes reading*).

HE. Oh, I didn't mean that you—I didn't mean that I—I didn't mean to be mean—I didn't mean anything!

SHE (*frigidly, looking up from her book*). Can't you see that you annoy me?

HE. That's funny. You don't annoy me a bit.

SHE (*dropping book in her lap*). Oh, this is perfectly impossible!

HE. Aren't you mistaken? Impossible? Why, it isn't even difficult.

SHE. Why do you stay and talk to me this way?

HE. It's the only way I know how to talk. I never learned the deaf and dumb language.

SHE (*looking off one side, then the other*). Oh, why isn't there a policeman here?

HE (*pointing off*). Do you see that baby carriage?

SHE. Yes, but I don't see a policeman.

HE. No, and you don't see any nursemaid, either.

SHE (*looks at him as if wondering what he is talking about*).

HE. That's why you don't see any policeman.

SHE. I don't know why they allow tramps in the park.

HE. Oh, do you see a tramp?

SHE (*looking straight at him*). Yes.

HE. You mean—I look like a tramp?

SHE. I mean you act like one.

HE. Why—I don't carry a tin can tied to my belt, or belong to the I-Won't-Works, or wear whiskers—or anything.

SHE. But you go around annoying people—and frightening defenseless women—and flirting—and everything.

HE. Flirting? Oh, are tramps as rough as that?

SHE. It's impossible for us to stay here and talk.

HE. Then let's go somewhere else and talk.

SHE. I mean we mustn't talk at all.

HE (*dejectedly*). Mustn't we? But why?

SHE. Because we haven't been introduced. I've never met you before.

HE (*forlornly*). All right. I'll go. You'll forgive me for having intruded?

SHE (*really cordial for the first time*). Certainly.

HE (*starts L. and stops when nearly off*). But supposing it had happened that we had met before?

SHE (*brightly*). Oh, that would be different. But, you see, it didn't happen.

HE. Well—it *might* happen! (*Exit L.*)

SHE (*looks after him regretfully, sighs and tries to interest herself in her book*).

HE (*having crossed around back stage, enters R. Approaches her as if he is sure of a welcome*). Oh, good morning.

SHE (*turns in startled surprise*).

HE. I mean good afternoon.

SHE. How dare you speak to me? I've never met you.

HE. Oh, yes. Don't you remember?

SHE. When?

HE. Ages ago. Why, you were sitting on that very bench, and the sunshine was coming down through the trees, and—

SHE (*frigidly*). Well? And what?

HE (*confusedly*). And what? Oh, yes, that's it. And what.

SHE. And then?

HE. And then—I took a l-o-n-g walk w-a-y around the park.

SHE (*assumes a haughty manner with a view to freezing him out*).

HE (*confidentially*). It isn't a very pretty park, you know. I've looked it all over. There's only one place that I really like. (*Her steady gaze of reproof is gradually robbing him of his assurance.*) There's only one girl in this park—I mean there's only one park in this bench—I mean—

SHE (*icily*). Don't you think you'd better continue that walk?

HE. Oh, no. I'm awfully tired. You know a person does get tired—standing on one's feet—

SHE. You might find it more restful to stand on your hands.

HE. I don't know. Do you recommend it?

SHE (*again turns her back and gazes at open book*).

HE (*after a moment's pause*). I—I really am tired, you know.

SHE (*does not appear to have heard him*).

HE. Would you object very much if I borrowed a part—just a teenty, tinety part—of your bench?

SHE (*without looking up*). Unfortunately I can't object. It's a public park.

HE (*trying desperately to make talk, as he sits down gingerly on the far end of the bench*). Yes, isn't it? Unfortunately it's a public park. A public park. A public park. Sounds rather like poetry, doesn't it? Are you fond of poetry?

SHE (*pays no attention*).

HE. So am I. Good poetry, that is. Sometimes I dash off a bit of poetry myself. Of course I don't know whether everyone would like my poetry. But I like my poetry. I'm very fond of it. I always say that my taste may not be the same as everybody else's taste, but I know what I like. Now, when I saw you here in the park—well, a real poem always comes by inspiration, don't you think? Yes, I think so, too. Undoubtedly. The way you said "public park"

was another inspiration. I think if I were sufficiently encouraged I could dash off something really epic. After the manner of Byron, perhaps—or Ella Wheeler Wilcox—although some people say my poetry sounds like Shelley in some of his rarer moments.

SHE (*studiously ignores him throughout this ridiculous chatter*).

HE. Let's see—where was I? Oh, you asked me to do a bit of verse on that inspiration. Well—how's this? (*Recites haltingly, as though extemporizing*). Oh, public park, my public park—no—that won't do. If it's public, it isn't mine; that is, it isn't all mine. I'm just a sort of a shareholder. I insist on my poetry being truthful. Art and truth are inseparable, don't you think? I'll try again:

O children, you should never go
Into a public park—

That's rather clever, isn't it? But it seems sort of—unfinished—somehow. Wait a minute! There's more of it. There must be more of it. (*Claps hand to brow, dramatically.*) I have it! Listen! (*With the last word he unconsciously touches her elbow and she draws her arm away. He recites haltingly as before:*)

O children, you should never go
Into a public park—
It's full of—full of—of awful animiles
Just like old Noah's ark.

Isn't that good? I'll say it is, too. "Park, ark"—see? It's regular poetry. It has rhymes in it, and everything. And then, if you want to, you can go on, like this:

The zebra is a kind of horse,
And yet again, he ain't.
So don't annoy the animals
And don't get near wet paint!

(*Turns and looks at her proudly, as though sure she will be delighted.*)

SHE (*bored, looking up*). The idea.

HE (*taken aback*). Yes, I see you get the idea. How do you like it?

SHE. How do I like what?

HE. The poem I just recited.

SHE. Oh, did you recite a poem?

HE. Did I recite a poem? Why, young lady, I—I posted a poem—all for you! Didn't you—notice it?

SHE. I was so interested in my book. (*Resumes, pretending to read.*)

HE. Are you fond of reading?

SHE (*without looking up*). Yes. Are you?

HE. Some kinds of stories.

SHE. What kind?

HE (*meaningly*). Love stories.

SHE. Mush!

HE. No. I don't care for cereal stories.

SHE (*impatiently*). Perhaps you don't realize that you're making it very difficult to read this way.

HE (*looking over her shoulder*). It must be difficult for you to read—this way. But I'm not responsible.

SHE. What do you mean?

HE (*casually*). Why, you're holding the book upside down.

SHE (*indignant at having revealed her lack of interest in the book, reverses it*). There! Do you like that better?

HE (*having just put his arm along the back of the bench and sighing contentedly*). Very much better!

SHE (*not noticing it because she is looking at the book*). I've just come to the most exciting place!

HE. I got here since you did. But do you find it exciting?

SHE (*not looking up*). Very!

HE (*moving his arm as though to embrace her, then checking himself and putting it back on the bench*). So do I!

SHE. It's such an extraordinary situation.

HE. Hm—yes. Isn't it?

SHE (*dropping the book and looking out into space*). It must be wonderful to be the heroine in a book!

HE. I'd be satisfied to be anybody at all—in the same book.

SHE (*with animation*). Now in this book the heroine is the most gorgeous thing who ever lived. She has the grace of Diana, the beauty of Venus, the dignity of Juno—

HE. Ye gods! I mean ye goddesses!

SHE. And never in all her eighteen summers has she ever met a man who has ever brought a single flutter to her heart. One day she goes walking in the wilderness. Out in the great primeval forest she meets, in a secluded spot—

HE. Yes, yes—go on! She meets—?

SHE. She meets—can't you guess?

HE. Modesty bids me remain silent.

SHE. She meets a man—the man. At the first glimpse of her he loves her madly. She bids him be gone, because he is a stranger. But deep in her heart—she knows—

HE. What does she know?

SHE (*the romantic spell breaking suddenly*). Oh, well, it's only a story. In real life that sort of thing never happens.

HE. Doesn't it? But—it *might* happen!

SHE (*with a touch of sadness and shaking her head*). No. Romance is one thing. Reality is quite another. They are as far apart as day and night. Romance is when you dream. Reality is when—

HE. When you wake up. Is that it?

SHE (*sadly*). That's it.

HE. Then why "wake up," as you call it? Why not go—dreaming—

SHE (*bitterly*). I shall "wake up" very soon. I am going to marry a man that I shall always detest!

HE. Detest? Then why marry him?

SHE. Oh, it's one of those things the family has had arranged for years, you know. It can't be helped. My father and mother say he's splendid—but there's sure to be something wrong with him. I know I shall *loathe* him!

HE. But you haven't found anything wrong with him yet?

SHE. I haven't even seen him—yet. He has been in Africa, chasing bugs and things. He's some kind of a

frightfully serious person—a naturalist, or something like that.

HE (*greatly amazed*). A naturalist!

SHE (*not observing his amazement*). Yes, and I know he's going to be a perfectly horrible old—old beetle!

HE. Ah, yes. An old beetle.

SHE. That sort of person is always—that sort of person.

HE. But does *he* know of this—this matrimonial plot?

SHE. Oh, I suppose not. But I know they intend to arrange it. And he'll be caught, and I'll be caught—like a couple of moths in his detestable old butterfly net, and we'll be thoroughly miserable! There's "romance" for you!

HE. But, you know, he really may not be at all a bad sort.

SHE. But I know he's an absolute *fright!* He's sure to be. I know just exactly. He has a mean disposition, and he's conceited, and cranky, and narrow-minded, and—

HE. Oh, really—

SHE. I'm prepared for the worst, and he's probably twice as bad as what I'm prepared for! Why, he's the sort of person, if he heard of my as much as *looking* at a perfectly strange man that I saw in the park, that he'd think I was a lost soul!

HE. You don't think he'd approve of you the way—I do?

SHE. Never!

HE. Why, he might even be enough like me so that he'd—fall in love with you!

SHE (*in confusion*). I really must go. I'm very late.

HE. Just a moment. You might help me with a—a problem that is not so unlike yours. I, too, am to meet someone I've never seen. And I believe there are—some intentions of that sort, too. I've been—would you believe it?—actually afraid to call. So I came for a stroll in the park—and I saw you—and I forgot everything else. Now I realize that she, too, may be just as much upset as I.

SHE. She's probably a horrid frump!

HE. That's what I thought—until I saw her.

SHE (*displeased*). Then she's—pretty?

HE. The most adorable creature in the world. (*Looks at watch.*) By George! I was to present this letter (*takes envelope out of pocket*) at her home and introduce myself a half hour ago.

SHE (*icily*). Then by all means don't let me keep you from—the most adorable creature in the world! Take your letter—and go!

(*Cue for blending pink flood lights to achieve sunset effect for curtain.*)

HE (*deliberately*). No, I don't think I shall—(*takes note from envelope and starts tearing it up*)—since I met you.

SHE. What are you doing?

HE (*looks earnestly into her face*). I think a letter is a very poor sort of an introduction—since I met you. (*Lets envelope and bits of paper flutter from his hand.*)

SHE. It's impossible, I tell you. That's romance, but this is—real life.

HE. Romance is sometimes real life, and it's the dream that's the nightmare.

SHE (*rising to go*). For you, perhaps. (*Looks down.*) You've dropped the envelope. (*Picks it up, glances at it and is astounded.*) Why—it's—(*looks at him in bewilderment*). Are you—?

HE (*smiling*). Exactly. But bugs and moths would mean very little to me now if I could catch—

SHE. What?

HE. A certain wonderful butterfly. I—I love you very much.

SHE (*thrilled and happy*). Oh, it's happening just like the book!

HE. Is it? What happened at the end of the book?

SHE (*shyly*). She told him that—she loved him.

HE (*anxiously, as he extends his hand*). But that hasn't happened yet.

SHE (*brightly, as she puts both her hands in his*). Well—it *might* happen!

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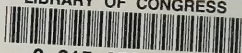
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Memphis Mose, 25 min.	5	1
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